

Weekend in Davenport — by Albert Haim

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1961 I received a letter from a Helen Kiok, who stated that NBC was planning on a TV show to be called “Chicago and All That Jazz” and that she had been informed that I had some films on personalities connected with jazz of the twenties. ... They paid me \$1,000.00 for the use of the film. Since the showing in late 1961, I have received letters from all over the United States, Paris, and England, requesting copies of the film, and to this date I’m still receiving letters. All of these requests have been denied with the explanation that if I gave out copies, my copy would no longer be a collectors [sic] item. Not being satisfied with this explanation, they keep begging for copies. Having heard so much about you and the museum, and upon the advice of my very good friend, the late Steve Brown [bass player with the Jean Goldkette Orchestra], I reached the decision that you should have the film for the museum. I can now proudly state to future writers, that the film is in the NOJC museum.”

For the technical aspects of the film, Steve deduced that it was shot with a hand-held ca 1925 Cine-Kodak Camera Model B worth about \$150 at the time. The really startling finding that Steve announced in his lecture is that the film in the Jazz Museum is not the original film. The film in the museum has the marking “Dupont Safety KL” on the edge. From known specifications, Steve told us that the cellulose acetate film dated form 1956!!! Evidently, the copy that Doc Cenardo gave to the museum was not the original Horvath film!! Steve’s conjecture is that by 1956, the original film may have been in relatively poor condition and Cenardo decided to make a copy. Steve gave some additional details about the process of restoration, carried out by the Film Technology Company, Inc. of Hollywood, CA. The audience showed its appreciation of Steve’s presentation by prolonged applause.

Hans then introduced me. I listed the two videos where short scenes from the film were included. 1. Garry Moore’s 1961 Dupont Show of the Week “Chicago and All That Jazz.” 2. Brigitte Berman’s documentary “Bix” Ain’t None of Them Play Like Him Yet.” I also mentioned the existence of a series of stills from the film reproduced in Sudhalter and Evans’ “Bix: Man and Legend,” and in Evans and Evans’ “Bix: The Leon Bix Beiderbecke Story.” Finally, I told the audience that copies of the film - slightly shorter than the restored film and with a different sequence of scenes - had been shown in the Bix concert of 1975 at Carnegie Hall.

Then, around 9 pm, Hans introduced the film and had it shown. The film was shown three times, twice in its original, silent form, and then once more accompanied by a soundtrack prepared by Hans by splicing together Goldkette recordings of October 1926. The audience seemed to have enjoyed particularly the showing with the music. Indeed, Hans’ clever splicing of the recordings added another dimension to the film. Speaking for myself, I want to state that it was fantastic to see Bix in action, running through the streets of Boston, playing in front of the bear cage in the zoo, looking and smiling at the camera, playing with the band. It reminded me -sadly- of the lost opportunity to see and hear Bix play his cornet in the film “The King of Jazz.”

The film, 3 minutes and 21 seconds in length, consists of a series of short scenes, shot mostly in New York City with one scene shot in Boston. The following are some of the scenes in the film.

1. Members of the Goldkette band, dressed in tuxedos, walking and running on Tremont Street, Boston, Massachusetts.

2. Several scenes were shot in the New York Zoo.

a. A boy riding a tortoise.
b. Musicians playing indoors next to the snake cage. A zoo attendant is standing in front of the band, holding what appears to be a python or a boa. While this scene was shown, Brad Kay noticed that a flash of light was seen while the band was playing. This will be further discussed below.

c. The musicians, all with hats on and holding their instruments, are seen



(L to R) Ray Voss, Hans Eekhoff, Steve Teeter

living a building. A person disguised as a gorilla comes out with the musicians and keeps up jumping up and down.

d. The band plays in front of the bear’s cage. The person in the gorilla suit dances the Charleston.

3. Steve Brown is seen following three girls crossing a street.

4. The musicians are in front of a World War I monument, Yankee 26th division — battle of the Marne — 1918 at Trugny.

5. Ray Lodwig “fights” a dummy dressed as a black youngster.

6. The band rehearses at the Victor recording studio.

7. Members of the band are seen doing “acrobatics.”

The flash observed during the scene of the band playing in the zoo, next to the snake cage, turns out to be one used in taking a widely distributed photograph. The photograph is in the front of the program for Premiere. It is also found in The Hoagy Carmichael Collection at Indiana University; on the cover of the Jean Goldkette CD issued by Transatlantic Radio; in the entry for Bix in the New

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Hans Eekhoff receiving an award from Steve Teeter

Grove Dictionary of Jazz; in the booklet accompanying the Mosaic CD set on Bix, Trumbauer and Teagarden; in Frank Driggs book “Black Beauty, White Heat”; on the cover of the Columbia CD “Bix Beiderbecke, Volume 1” (the photo is colourised). From a comparison of the photograph with the images from the film, it is apparent that the photo is taken with a flash held high above and to the right of the photographer, the camera being positioned at about waist level and to the left of the individual shooting the film.

The evening ended with a jam session that continued until the early hours of next day. The musicians participating in the jam session were Jim Cullum, Peter Diepeveen, Josh Duffee, Hans Eekhoff, Brad Kay, Tom Pletcher, Matt Craighead, and a young string bass player with Duffee’s orchestra.

It was a fantastic day, great company, great food, an unusual opportunity of seeing moving footage of Bix, and great music. A day to remember for the rest of my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All the people who attended the premiere in Davenport as well as all Bixophiles around the world owe a great debt of gratitude to Hans Eekhoff for his initiative in getting the film restored and to Steve Teeter for getting the job done. We also must thank Hans for his organizational skills -with the help of the local officials of the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Society -Ray, Muriel, Rich, Julie- and for his generosity in assuming all expenses associated with the showing of the film as well as of the jam session on June 5. Last, but not least, we must thank the Avati Brothers, the owners of the Bix house, and Marilene, their US representative, for making available Bix’s house for the premiere showing of this very important film.

Some of the images were kindly provided by Peter Diepeveen, Chris Beiderbecke and Rich Johnson.



The Final Jam Session



Beiderbecke Inn Owners Dennis & Pam LaRoque



(L to R) Hans Eekhoff, Ray & Muriel Voss, Rich Johnson, Mima Haim Peter den Boer and Albert Haim

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